

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listing of claims in the application.

**Listing of Claims:**

1-8. (Canceled).

9. (Currently Amended) A method for producing a perpendicular magnetic recording medium, ~~according to Claim 8, further~~ comprising:

a step of forming a cobalt-containing magnetic layer directly or with an intervention of an underlayer on a substrate,

a first step of heating said magnetic layer,

a step of forming a protective layer on said magnetic layer, and

a second step of heating the thus formed layers under atmospheric pressure after the formation of said protective layer, wherein

said second step of heating is carried out with a ~~the~~ heating temperature no higher than 250°C.

10. (Currently Amended) A method for producing a perpendicular magnetic recording medium according to Claim-~~8~~ 9, further comprising:

a step of forming a non-magnetic layer ~~film~~ with hexagonal closed-packed (hcp) structure before the formation of said magnetic layer~~film~~.

11. (Canceled).

12. (New) A method for producing a perpendicular magnetic recording medium according to Claim 9, wherein said step of forming a protective layer on said magnetic layer comprises forming said protective layer of a carbonaceous material.